

LAMPIDES BOETICUS L. AND THECLA BETULAE L. IN SURREY.—On the very warm afternoon of 4th September 1971, I saw in the gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society at Wisley a female *Lampides boeticus* (Long-tailed Blue). It was settled on a flower in the Long Border, and its characteristic underside caught my eye. It then took off with the swift, jerky flight with which I am familiar on the Continent and, after a brief circuit, disappeared over the hedge. It was probably an immigrant, having perhaps the same origin as the *Rhodometra sacraria* L., of which I understand several have been seen in Devon, and one in Surrey, during the past week. Other butterflies were much in evidence at Wisley: the buddleias were smothered by well over a hundred *Aglais-urticae* L., with a few *Inachis io* L., and a single *Vanessa atalanta* L., and a *Celastrina argiolus* L. was also seen. When I returned at about 5.30 p.m. to my own garden in Bramley, I found a very battered female *Thecla betulae* (Brown Hairstreak) feeding on the buddleia. Though I have found eggs of this species in the Durfold Woods a few miles away, and have several times bred the butterfly from larvae collected elsewhere, I had never before seen it in the wild in Britain. After more than forty years of collecting, it was quite an experience to see *two* kinds of butterflies for the first time in Britain in a single afternoon!—R. F. BRETHERTON, Folly Hill, Birtley Green, Bramley Surrey. 6.ix.71.

## Current Literature

**West African Snakes** by G. S. Cansdale, illustrated by John Norris Wood. vi+74+15 Coloured plates, Longmans £0.65

The author opens this interesting little book with a chapter headed "Snakes in Nature" which gives the reader a very good idea of the structure and habits of snakes in general and explains their classification into families. Chapter 11 is headed "Snakes in West Africa: Frequency, Social and Economic Importance" in which he explains the snake position in West Africa with interesting, and sometimes amusing examples to illustrate his points. Chapters 111 to V11 deal with the species of snake from West Africa, a chapter to a family or group of families in which over 40 species are listed. The excellent illustrations coupled with these descriptions should make identification reasonably easy once one has "got one's eye in."

Chapter V111 is headed "Snake-bite — its Prevention and Treatment" in which the author gives practical advice from all angles, and very wisely does his best to allay the fear experienced by most patients, which often has more adverse effect on the victim than the snake's venom has.—S.N.A.J.